

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information sharing apparatus, which communicates with at least one terminal corresponding to a first user of users, comprising:

5 an acquiring unit configured to acquire a first information item which includes an anonymous information item and a personal information item, the personal information item corresponding to an informant of the anonymous information item;

10 a separating unit configured to separate the personal information item from the first information item, to obtain the anonymous information item;

 a first storing unit configured to store the personal information item and the anonymous information item;

15

 a second storing unit configured to store a first access level which is assigned to a first group of the users who can access only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item, and to store a second access level which is assigned to a second group of users of the users who can access both of the anonymous information item and the personal information item;

20

 a receiving unit configured to receive a request message for accessing the first information item, the request message being transmitted from the terminal;

25

 a first transmitting unit configured to transmit

only the anonymous information item out of the
anonymous information item and the personal information
item to the terminal in response to the request
message, when an access level predetermined to the
5 first user is equal to the first access level;

a second transmitting unit configured to transmit
both of the anonymous information item and the personal
information item in response to the request message,
when the access level of the first user is equal to the
10 second access level.

2. An information sharing apparatus, which
communicates with at least one terminal corresponding
to a first user of users, comprising:

an acquiring unit configured to acquire a second
15 information item which includes a personal information
item;

an extracting unit configured to extract the
personal information item from the second information
item, to obtain extracted personal information item;

20 a generating unit configured to generate an
anonymous information item by deleting the personal
information item from the second information item;

a first storing unit configured to store the
extracted personal information item and the anonymous
25 information item;

a second storing unit configured to store a first
access level which is assigned to a first group of

users of the users who can access only the anonymous
information item out of the anonymous information item
and the personal information item, and to store a
second access level which is assigned to a second group
5 of users of the users who can access both of the
anonymous information item and the personal information
item;

a receiving unit configured to receive a request
message for accessing the second information item, the
10 request message being transmitted from the terminal;

a first transmitting unit configured to transmit
only the anonymous information item out of the
anonymous information item and the personal information
item to the terminal in response to the request
15 message, when an access level predetermined to the
first user is equal to the first access level;

a synthesizing unit configured to synthesize the
personal information item with the anonymous
information item, to obtain a regenerated second
20 information item;

a second transmitting unit configured to transmit
the regenerated second information item in response to
the request message, when the access level of the first
user is equal to the second access level.

25 3. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the
anonymous information item is a vital data item of the
informant.

4. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the second information item is an image, and the personal information item is an image of a personal face

5. An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising: a enciphering unit configured to encipher the anonymous information item to obtain an enciphered anonymous information item; and, wherein the first storing unit stores the enciphered anonymous information item.

10 6. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the anonymous information item is composed of various information items, and the first transmitting unit and the second transmitting unit transmit one or more requested information items of the various information items, the one or more information items being requested by the request message.

7. An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a third storing unit configured to store a pair of IDs of each of the personal information item and the anonymous information item;

a second acquiring unit configured to acquire one ID of the pair, based on another ID of the pair, the another ID corresponding to the anonymous information item; and

25 a third acquiring unit configured to acquire the personal information item which corresponds to the one ID and is to be transmit in response to the request

message, from the first storing unit.

8. An apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising a third storing unit configured to store a pair of IDs of each of the extracted personal

5 information item and the anonymous information item;

a second acquiring unit configured to acquire one ID of the pair, based on another ID of the pair, the another ID corresponding to the anonymous information item; and

10 a third acquiring unit configured to acquire the extracted personal information item which corresponds to the one ID and is to be synthesized with the anonymous information, from the first storing unit.

9. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the
15 generating unit generate the anonymous information item by overwriting into an area corresponding to the personal information item with arbitrary symbols.

10. A method for sharing an acquired information items with a plurality of terminals corresponding to a
20 plurality of users respectively, comprising:

acquiring a first information item which includes an anonymous information item and a personal information item, the personal information item corresponding to an informant of the anonymous
25 information item;

separating the personal information item from the first information item, to obtain the anonymous

information item;

storing the personal information item and the anonymous information item in the first memory device;

5 storing a first access level which is assigned to a first group of users of the users who can access only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item, and a second access level which is assigned to a second group of users of the users who can access both of the
10 anonymous information item and the personal information item, in a second memory device;

receiving a request message for accessing the first information item, the request message being transmitted from one of the terminals;

15 transmitting only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item to the one of the terminals in response to the request message, when an access level predetermined to a first user of the users who is
20 corresponds to the one of the terminals is equal to the first access level;

transmitting both of the anonymous information item and the personal information item in response to the request message, when the access level of the first
25 user is equal to the second access level.

11. A method for sharing an acquired information items with a plurality of terminals corresponding to a

plurality of users respectively, comprising:

acquiring a second information item which includes
a personal information item;

5 extracting the personal information item from the
second information item, to obtain extracted personal
information item;

generating an anonymous information item by
deleting the personal information item from the second
information item;

10 storing the extracted personal information item
and the anonymous information item in a first memory
device;

storing a first access level which is assigned to
a first group of users of the users who can access only
15 the anonymous information item out of the anonymous
information item and the personal information item, and
a second access level which is assigned to a second
group of users of the users who can access both of the
anonymous information item and the personal information
20 item;

receiving a request message for accessing the
second information item, the request message being
transmitted from one of the terminals;

transmitting only the anonymous information item
25 out of the anonymous information item and the personal
information item to the one of the terminal in response
to the request message, when an access level

predetermined to a first user of the users who is
corresponds to the one of the terminals is equal to the
first access level;

5 synthesizing the personal information item with
the anonymous information item, to obtain a regenerated
second information item;

transmitting the regenerated second information
item in response to the request message, when the
access level of the first user is equal to the second
10 access level.

12. A method according to claim 10, wherein the
anonymous information item is a vital data item of the
informant.

13. A method according to claim 11, wherein the
15 second information item is an image, and the personal
information item is an image of a personal face.

14. A method according to claim 10, wherein the
anonymous information item is composed of various
information items, transmitting only the anonymous
20 information item transmit one or more requested
information items of the various information items, the
one or more information items being requested by the
request message; and transmitting both of the anonymous
information item and the personal information item
25 transmit the one or more requested information items of
the various information items.

15. A method according to claim 10, which includes

storing a pair of IDs of each of the personal
information item and the anonymous information item in
a third memory device;

5 acquiring one ID of the pair, based on another ID
of the pair, the another ID corresponding to the
anonymous information item; and

10 acquiring the personal information item which
corresponds to the one ID and is to be transmit in
response to the request message, from the first memory
device.

16. A method according to claim 11, which includes
storing a pair of IDs of each of the extracted personal
information item and the anonymous information item in
the third memory device;

15 acquiring one ID of the pair, based on another ID
of the pair, the another ID corresponding to the
anonymous information item; and

20 acquiring the extracted personal information item
which corresponds to the one ID and is to be synthesize
with the anonymous information, from the first memory
device.

25 17. A method according to claim 11, wherein the
generating generates the anonymous information item by
overwriting into an area corresponding to the personal
information item with in arbitrary symbols.